

if indeed as much, for the serials they issue nowadays, the majority of which are no whit better than was Zola's tale. It was not literature certainly ; but it was clearly and concisely written, and generally good as narrative, in spite of some sentimental mawkishness and sensational absurdity. As often happens with hack work of this description the tale opens better than it ends. Long, indeed, before it was finished, the writer had grown heartily tired of it, as many of its readers must have perceived. At the same time it was not a work to be ashamed of, particularly in the case of an author fighting for his daily bread; and Zola, when at the height of his reputation, showed that he was not ashamed of it, for on his adversaries casting this forgotten " pot boiler" in his face, he caused it to be reprinted, with a vigorous preface, in which he recounted under what circumstances the story had been written.¹

The money paid for it had been very acceptable to him, for it had meant an income of two hundred francs a month for nine months in succession; and it had enabled him to give time to some real literary work, the writing of his first notable novel, " The"rese Eaquin." This he had begun in 1866; the idea of it then being suggested to him by Adolphe Belot and Ernest Daudet's " Ydnus de

Gordes,"
in which a husband is killed by the wife's lover,
who, with

¹ Besides appearing serially in "Le Messager de Provence," "Les Mysteres de Marseille" was issued in parts (16mo) by Mengelle of Marseilles, 1867-1868 ; and in volume form (with preface) by Charpentier, Paris, 1884. Both "La Lanterne" and "Le Corsaire," of Paris, published the story serially after the Franco-German "War. In the latter journal it was called "Un Duel Social," "by Agrippa," under which title it was again issued in parts (12mo) for popular consumption. There is an English translation : "The Mysteries of Marseilles," translated by Edward Yizetelly. London, Hutchinson & Co., 1895 *et seq.*